

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 1, 2004. Claims 1 to 6, 8 to 10 and 13 are now in the application, of which Claims 1, 10 and 13 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Turning first to a formal matter involving Applicants' claim for priority, page 4 of the Office Action incorrectly indicates that a certified copy of Applicants' Japanese priority document has not been filed. In fact, Applicants previously submitted a certified copy of the priority document, Japanese application 2001-023847, with a Submission Of Priority Document dated August 9, 2002. Enclosed herewith are copies of the Submission Of Priority Document and a stamped postcard, which indicates a filing date of August 12, 2002. Accordingly, Applicants request the Patent Office to acknowledge receipt of the certified copy of Japanese priority application 2001-023847.

An objection was lodged against the drawings, with a requirement being made to designate prior art legends for Figures 6A to 6C. As requested, the prior art legend has been supplied for the foregoing figures in the substituted formal drawings accompanying the Letter Transmitting Formal Drawings filed herewith.

In addition, an objection was lodged against the title of invention. A new title has been supplied along the lines suggested in the Office Action.

An objection was also lodged against Claims 1 and 10 for various informalities. Claims 1 and 10 have been amended to attend to this objection.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the foregoing objections is respectfully requested.

Page 8 of the specification has been revised to delete language that describes Figure 1 inaccurately. Specifically, one sentence on page 8 states that separation occurs after kerfs have been formed in Figure 1D. However, separation has already occurred, as shown in Figure 1C. The sentence in question has been deleted.

Turning to the merits, Applicants thank the Examiner for her indication of allowable subject matter.

Claims 1 to 7 and 10 were rejected for obviousness-type double patenting over issued Claims 1 to 19 of U.S. Patent 6,677,183 (Sakaguchi). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The invention, as recited by amended Claim 1, concerns a method of manufacturing a thin-film semiconductor device comprising a preparation step of preparing a member having a semiconductor film with a semiconductor element and/or semiconductor integrated circuit on a separation layer, a separation step of separating the member at the separation layer by applying a pressure of a fluid to the side surface of the separation layer, and a chip forming step of, after the separation step, dividing the semiconductor film into chips.

The invention, as recited by amended Claim 10, concerns a method of manufacturing a thin-film device comprising a preparation step of preparing a member having a semiconductor film with a semiconductor element and/or semiconductor integrated circuit on a separation layer, a bonding step of bonding the member to a support member, a chip forming step of, after the bonding step, dividing the member into chips in desired regions, and a separation step of, after the chip forming step, separating the member at the separation layer

The invention, as recited by newly added Claim 13, concerns a method of manufacturing a thin-film semiconductor device comprising a step of preparing a member having a semiconductor film with a semiconductor element and/or semiconductor integrated circuit on a separation layer, a bonding step of bonding the member to a support member, a separation step of, after the bonding step, separating the member at the separation layer by a pressure of a fluid, and a chip forming step of, after the separation step, dividing the semiconductor film into chips.

Thus, according to a feature of the invention recited in Claim 1, the chip forming step of dividing the semiconductor film into chips occurs after the separation step.

In addition, the inventions recited in Claims 10 and 13 include a feature of a bonding step of bonding a member having a semiconductor film with a semiconductor element and/or semiconductor integrated circuit on a separation layer to a support member.

The claims of Sakaguchi are not seen to recite either of the foregoing features.

On page 6, the Office Action alleged that Claims 1 and 15 of Sakaguchi disclose a chip forming step that occurs after a separation step. Applicants have revised Claim 1 to specify that their chip-forming step “divides” the semiconductor film into chips, and respectfully note that in Sakaguchi’s Claim 1 the separation step is carried out after the kerf-formation step. In view of the foregoing, the claims of Sakaguchi are not seen to disclose or suggest at least the feature of a chip forming step that divides a semiconductor film into chips and that occurs after a separation step.

Additionally, with respect to Claims 10 and 13, the claims of Sakaguchi are not seen to recite a bonding step of bonding a member having a semiconductor film with a

semiconductor element and/or semiconductor integrated circuit on a separation layer to a support member.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the double patenting rejection is respectfully requested.


An Information Disclosure Statement was filed on May 26, 2004.

Consideration of the art cited therein is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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